

Exhibit A


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Sep 29

Project Veritas #BallotHarvesting Amplification

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On Sunday night, a right-wing activist group, Project Veritas, released a video alleging illegal ballot harvesting in Minnesota. The video made several falsifiable claims that have either been debunked by subsequent reporting or are without any factual support. As the video calls into question the integrity of the election using misleading or inaccurate information, we determined this video to be a form of election disinformation. While we have reported our findings to the relevant online platforms, this video stands as an interesting example of what a domestic, coordinated *elite disinformation* campaign looks like in the United States. This post will explore the timeline of how the ideas in this video were initially seeded and then aggressively spread.

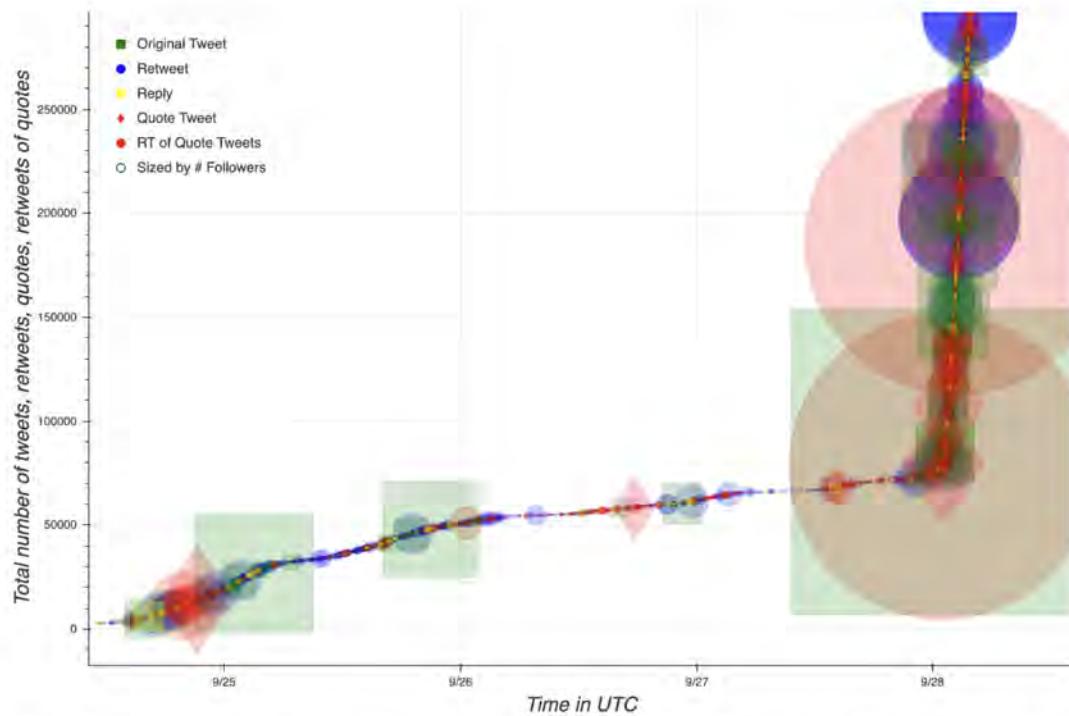


Figure 1: Cumulative graph of tweets about Ballot Harvesting or Ilhan Omar between Sept. 24-28. This graph only plots tweets from accounts with more than 10,000 followers. The shape and color of each tweet marking reflects the tweet type, while the size reflects the tweeting account's follower count. This view demonstrates a notable aspect of elite disinformation, or the key role of verified influencers in propagating the chosen narrative early on. ([Interactive Graph Here](#))

Pre-Amplification of the #BallotHarvesting Video

On Thursday, Sept. 24th, conservative provocateur James O'Keefe tweeted that his organization, Project Veritas, would be releasing "UNDENIABLE VIDEO PROOF OF SYSTEMIC VOTER FRAUD" on Monday, Sept. 28. The teaser and the accompanying hashtag #BallotHarvesting was amplified by prominent conservatives across social media. Users were encouraged to sign up at www.ballot-harvesting.com to receive the evidence by email on Sept. 28.

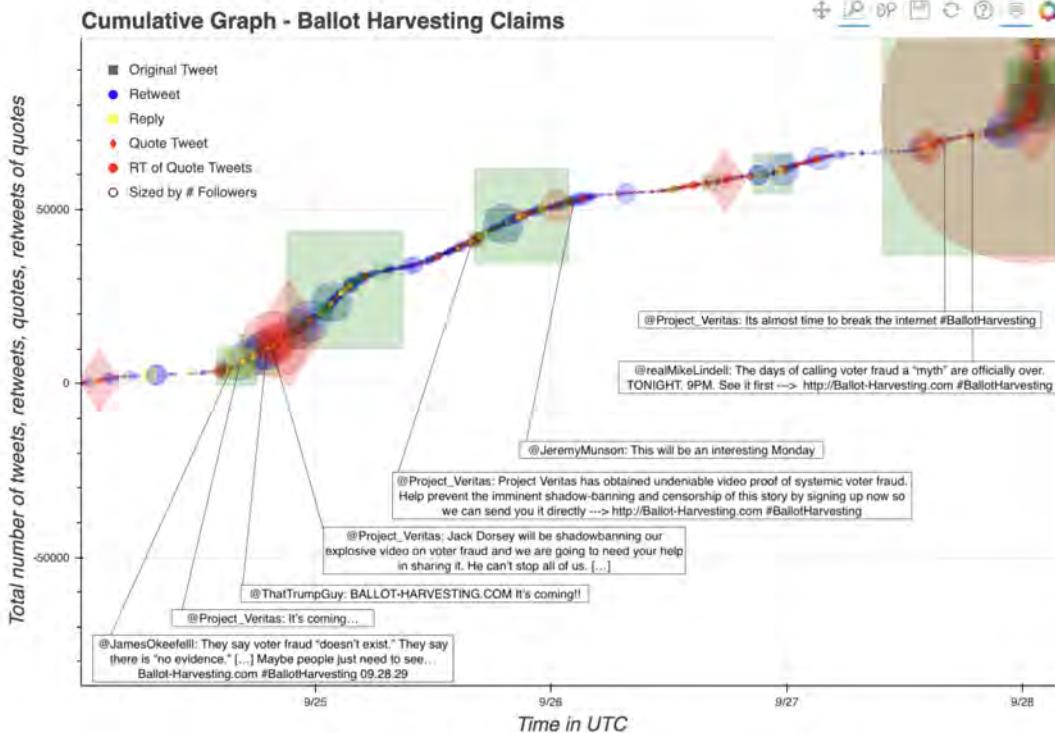


Figure 2: A zoomed-in version of the cumulative graph introduced in Figure 1. This view has been annotated to narrate key aspects of the pre-release amplification timeline.

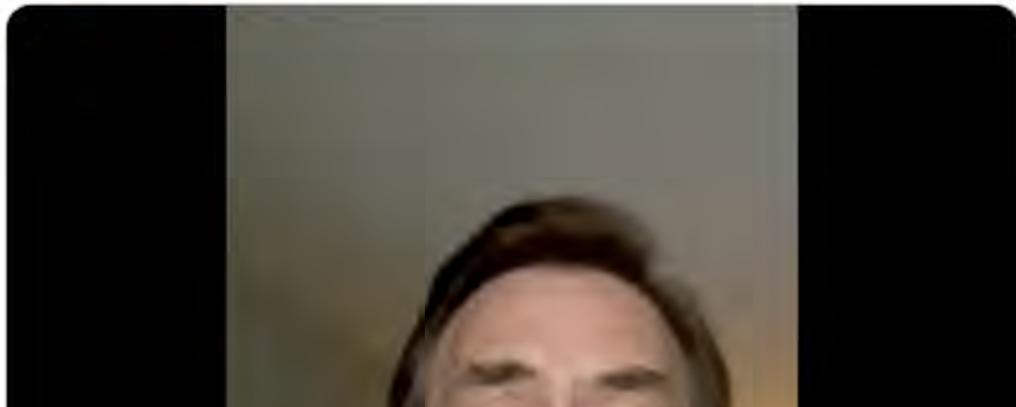
The following Sunday afternoon at around 2:00 p.m. Pacific, the New York Times released an [investigative report](#) detailing nearly two decades of President Trump's tax history. The findings in this report gained considerable traction across both traditional media and social media. Roughly an hour later (3:11 p.m. Pacific), noted businessman and Trump supporter Mike Lindell announced that he had spoken with O'Keefe at Project Veritas and that their report would now be coming out on Sept. 27 at 9:00 p.m. Eastern / 6:00 p.m. Pacific, a day earlier than originally teased. Notably, there was no announcement or confirmation by Project Veritas, O'Keefe, or other propagators of the teaser for this exposé to shift to this Sunday launch. Additionally, as of 10:30 p.m. Pacific on Sept. 28, the [signup website](#) for this launch still boldly displayed "9.28.20" as the release date for the tapes. Lindell is the chair of the Minnesota Trump Campaign. He has no known professional affiliation with Project Veritas.



Mike Lindell

@realMikeLindell

The days of calling voter fraud a "myth" are officially over.
TONIGHT.
9PM.
 See it first ---> [#BallotHarvesting](http://Ballot-Harvesting.com)





3:11 PM · Sep 27, 2020 from Chaska, MN · Twitter for iPhone

7.1K Retweets 248 Quote Tweets 13.4K Likes

Image 1: In the video accompanying his tweet, Lindell appears saying: "I just met James O'Keefe with Project Veritas and James showed me footage of systematic voter fraud going on." This was the first indication of a Sunday release for the well-advertised Monday launch.

Early Amplification of Release driven by Blue-Check influencers

The day-early release turned out to be a video alleging unlawful collection of ballots in Minnesota. The video makes several statements that have been questioned by respected media outlets and others that are not backed by any evidence. Amplified by many prominent voices across conservative social media, these dubious claims began to compete with – and even overwhelm – the reporting on Trump's tax returns. Given their heavy early marketing of a Sept. 28 release date, it seems highly likely that the NYT report on the 27th contributed to O'Keefe and Project Veritas releasing their video a day early and abandoning their planned email distribution:

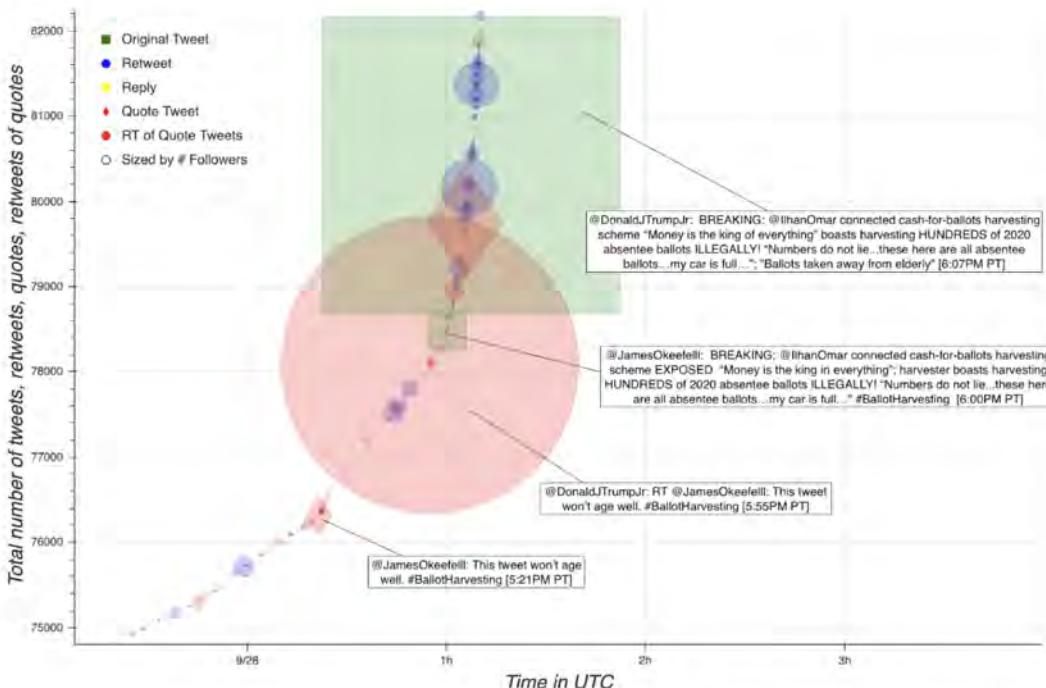


Figure 3: Twitter use of the hashtag #BallotHarvesting from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Pacific on Sept. 28. Size of shape corresponds to the size of the user's audience. Annotations display the text of the tweets by O'Keefe and Trump, Jr. ([View interactive graph](#))

Among the more notable and earliest amplifications was that of Donald Trump, Jr., which began right before the video's launch. At 5:21 p.m. Pacific,

O'Keefe quote tweeted a Sept. 6th tweet from Rep. Ilhan Omar, suggesting that her reassurances regarding the low rates of voter fraud "won't age well." Donald Trump Jr. retweeted O'Keefe's quote tweet Sept. 27 at 5:55 p.m. Pacific, just five minutes before the official Project Veritas release.

Donald Trump Jr. Retweeted



James O'Keefe

@JamesOKeefelll

This tweet won't age well. #BallotHarvesting



Rep. Ilhan Omar

@Ilhan · Sep 6

Friendly reminder that the vote-by-mail fraud rate is 0.00006%.

5:21 PM · Sep 27, 2020 · Twitter Web App

15K Retweets **477 Quote Tweets** **37.5K Likes**



Then, at 6:00 p.m., O'Keefe kicked off the flurry of #BallotHarvesting's official launch:



James O'Keefe

@JamesOKeefelll

BREAKING: @IlhanOmar connected cash-for-ballots harvesting scheme EXPOSED

"Money is the king in everything"; harvester boasts harvesting HUNDREDS of 2020 absentee ballots ILLEGALLY! "Numbers do not lie...these here are all absentee ballots...my car is full..."

#BallotHarvesting



1:46 5.4M views

#BallotHarvesting | VeritasTips@protonmail.com

BE BOLD SOMETHING

6:00 PM · Sep 27, 2020 · Twitter Media Studio

45.7K Retweets 6.7K Quote Tweets 60.9K Likes

This launch was immediately picked up among the right-wing Twitter influencer sphere. Within the first 15 minutes of O'Keefe's posting, the initial #BallotHarvesting launch was tweeted about by eight separate verified conservative influencers, including Ryan Fournier, Paul Gosar, Michelle Malkin, and Cassandra Fairbanks. The early amplification by verified users with large audiences was a key part of pushing the #BallotHarvesting narrative to Twitter's Trending page within two hours of its initial launch.

The screenshot shows the Twitter Trends interface. At the top, there is a search bar and a gear icon. Below the search bar, the trending categories are listed: For you, US Elections, Trending, News, Sports, Entertainment, and a more options arrow. The first trend is "1 · Politics · Trending" with the hashtag **#TrumpIsBroke**, followed by "Trending with: #TrumpTaxReturns". A card for this trend features a photo of Donald Trump and text from the New York Times about his tax returns. It has 165K tweets. The second trend is "2 · Politics · Trending" with the hashtag **#TrumpIsNotABillionaire**, with 61K tweets. The third trend is "3 · Movies & TV · Trending" with the hashtag **#LovecraftCountry**, with 38.9K tweets. The fourth trend is "4 · Politics · Trending" with the hashtag **Project Veritas**, with 162K tweets. Each trend card includes a small photo of the influencer and their name.

Among the earliest, Donald Trump Jr. independently uploaded the same O'Keefe video and a message propagating the #BallotHarvesting narrative within seven minutes of O'Keefe's original post. Donald Trump Jr.'s video upload was notable as it did not have the Twitter label 'From **James O'Keefe**' as other blue-check influencers did on their video re-shares. This detail, along with video metadata demonstrating that the Donald Trump Jr. version of the video was separately uploaded and re-encoded by Twitter, indicates that the Trump campaign possibly had access to the video before the general public and raises questions of coordination.

The image contains two side-by-side screenshots of Twitter posts. On the left, a post from Ryan Fournier (@RyanAFournier) reads: "BREAKING: @IlhanOmar connected to cash-for-ballots harvesting scheme. "Money is the king in everything"; harvester boasts harvesting HUNDREDS of 2020 absentee ballots ILLEGALLY! "Numbers do not lie...these here are all absentee ballots...my car is full..."." On the right, a post from Donald Trump Jr. (@DonaldJTrumpJr) reads: "BREAKING: @IlhanOmar connected cash-for-ballots harvesting scheme "Money is the king of everything" boasts harvesting HUNDREDS of 2020 absentee ballots ILLEGALLY! "Numbers do not lie...these here are all absentee ballots...my car is full..."; "Ballots taken away from elderly"."



Image 3: Donald Trump Jr's video was both one of the earliest as well as the only video that was a direct upload instead of a direct reshare of the O'Keefe video.

Finally, Trump, Jr. posted the incident onto his Facebook at 6:15 p.m., 10 minutes before O'Keefe – the original Twitter poster – shared it on his own account. The sandwiching of Trump, Jr.'s amplification of the Project Veritas video raises the possibility that he was aware of the timing of the release in a way that was not known to the general public.

We take three main conclusions from these events:

First, different tech platforms took widely different actions based upon our reporting of this content. This is likely due to the video falling into the gap between general political disinformation and the types of election-related disinformation that generally triggers more aggressive actions by platforms.

- **Facebook** – Labeled a single story sharing the video with a link to their voting information center, but did not mark the original upload of the video or any other related posts.
- **Twitter** – Took no action
- **YouTube** – Took no action
- **TikTok** – Immediately removed all examples of the video
- **Reddit** – Took no action

Second, the circumstances of the run-up to the planned release of the video, the sudden change in plans and the timeline of video uploads and posting strongly suggest the possibility of coordination between Project Veritas and official members of the Trump Campaign.

Third, this is a good example of the ability of a small number of coordinated political influencers to drive the narrative on a platform such as Twitter or Facebook and to generate millions of impressions for a single video. This video should not be considered to have organically "gone viral", and the effectiveness of this technique, as well as the weak response by the most critical platforms, lends us to believe that we should expect misleading videos of this type to be pushed in a similar fashion in the coming days.

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in a Ballot Misinformation Story

Emerging Narratives Around 'Mail Dumping' and
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